



Coinciding with a positive economic climate, Middletown is finding its undeveloped land under greater threat of development.

- Housing developments continue to expand into what was wooded and agricultural lands west of I-91 and continue to push further south and west.

Rapid Growth



Rapid Growth - the city is averaging well over 125 new houses per year. The city has received or will be receiving new subdivision applications for several hundred new lots. The city grew by an impressive 7 % between 1990 - 2000. The school-aged population continues to increase and several schools are at or over capacity.



For a city as well populated as Middletown, there is a surprising amount of undeveloped land.

- Only 26% of all the land zoned for residential uses has been developed.
- Based on the Plan of Development's theoretical build-out, Middletown's future population could potentially rise to 65,000 people assuming that all undeveloped residential acreage is developed at the highest density allowed by current zoning.

Areas Currently Available for Residential Development

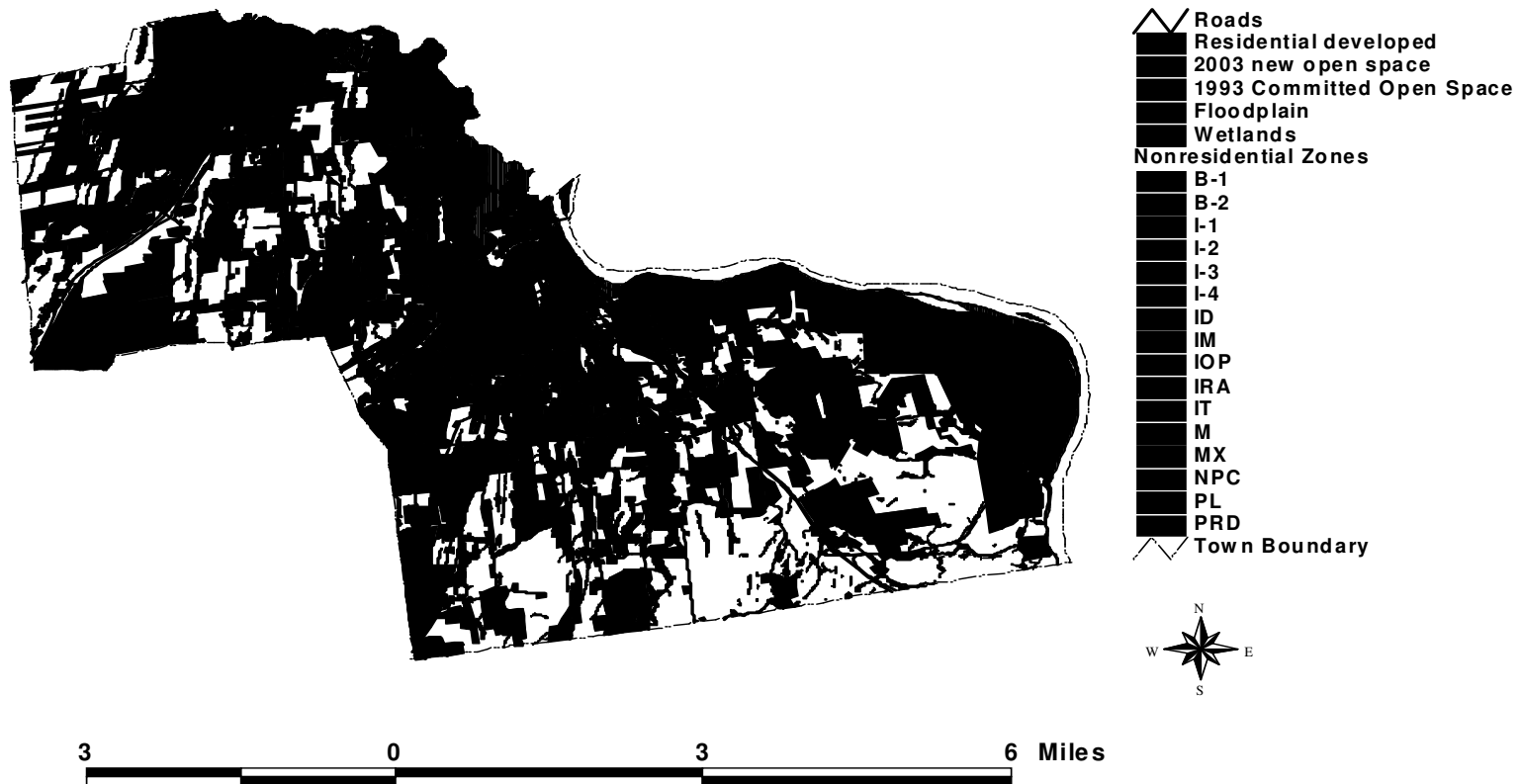


Figure 1 shows those areas that are currently available for residential development. If these areas are developed to the maximum allowable density, the population will be approximately 65,000. This study will now use a process of elimination to analyze the developable lands further to determine their true holding capacity based on soil types.



While full build-out to 65,000
would severely and negatively
impact Middletown's
character, low-level growth
can be absorbed by the present
infrastructure



Taking into account that some parcels have development constraints, we have calculated what we believe to be a more accurate (realistic) amount of developable residential land with a more moderate growth rate resulting in about 55,000 residents.

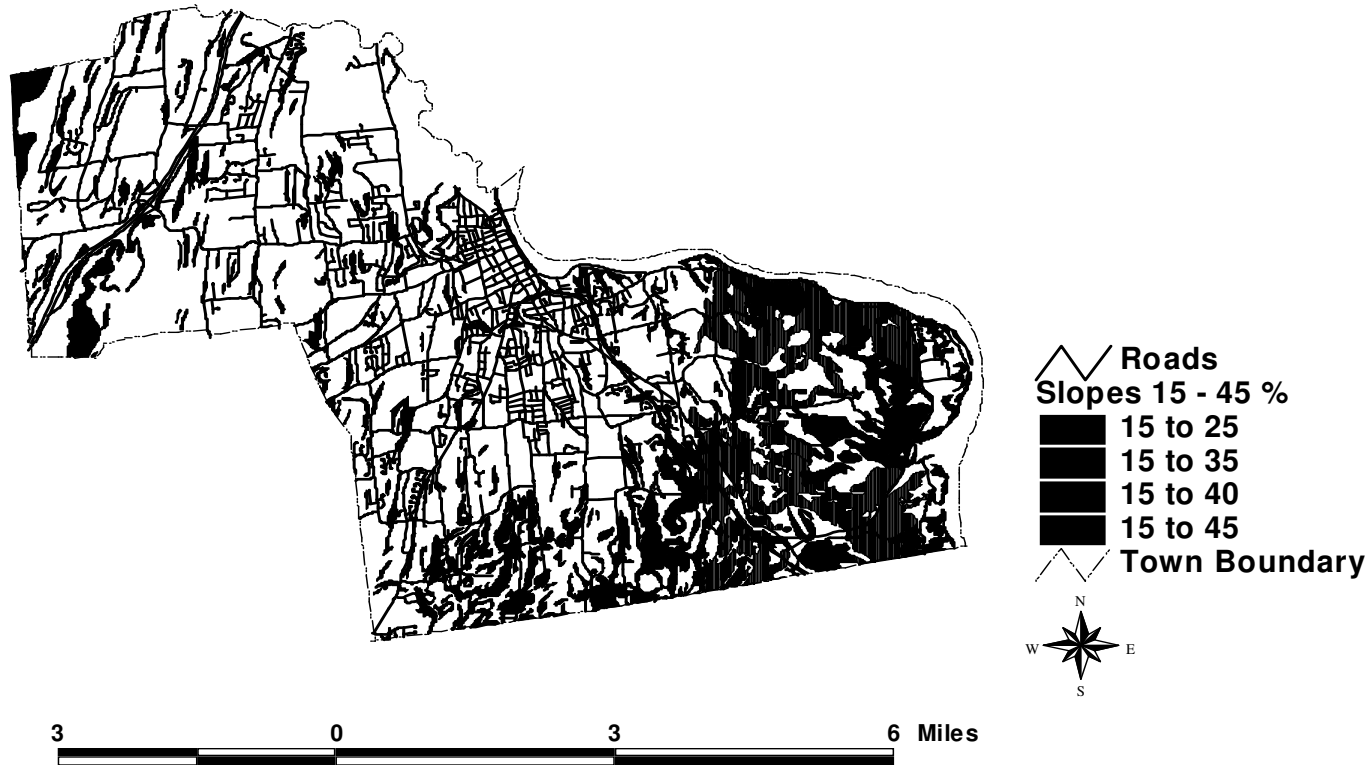


Following this projection, the City will need approximately 2,400 additional housing units which Middletown has ample undeveloped land to accommodate the increase

- We must now confront the challenge of channeling this growth so that additional housing units benefit the city and do not detract from the existing quality of life.

Areas of land in Middletown with slopes of fifteen to forty-five percent

Areas with Steep Slopes



These areas are outside of the sewer service area and pose significant challenges to septic design and overall development. Not surprisingly, these areas remain undeveloped.

Areas with a shallow Depth to Water Table

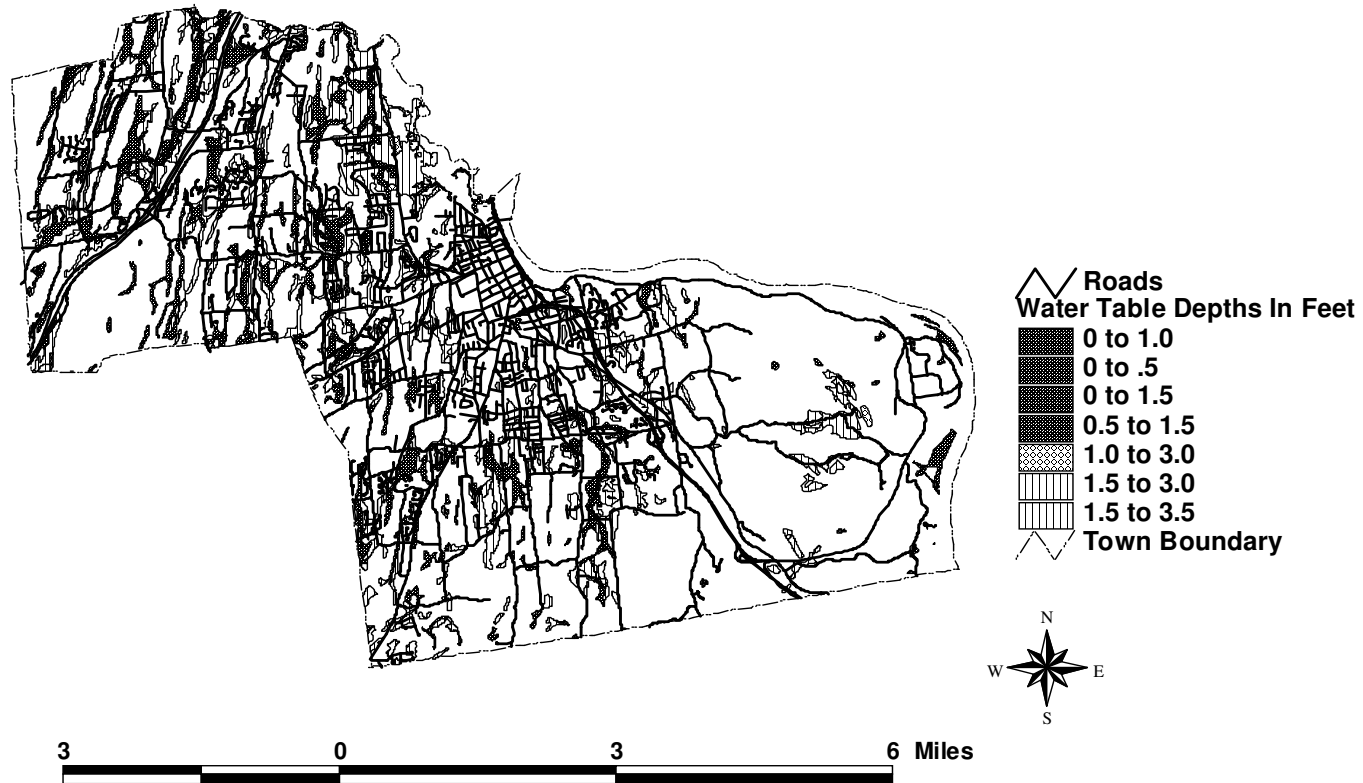
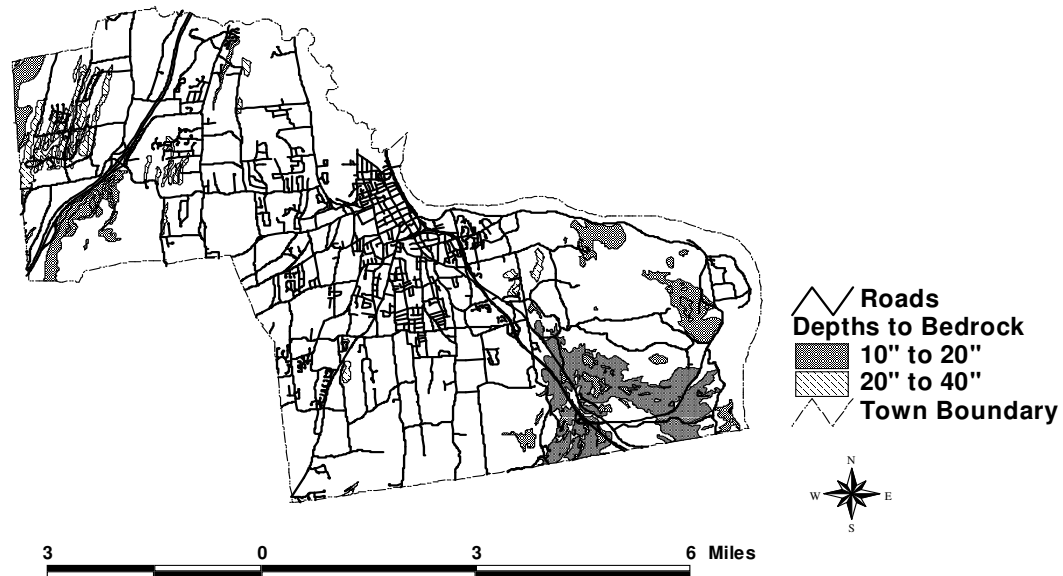


Figure 2 shows where water table depths range from shallow depths of 0 to 3.5 feet. These lands are for the most part considered unsuitable for development. This figure shows that land with shallow water table depths are scattered throughout the City. Much of this land is found in wetlands and floodplain areas. Because of this fact, much of these areas were already deleted in the developable land calculation.

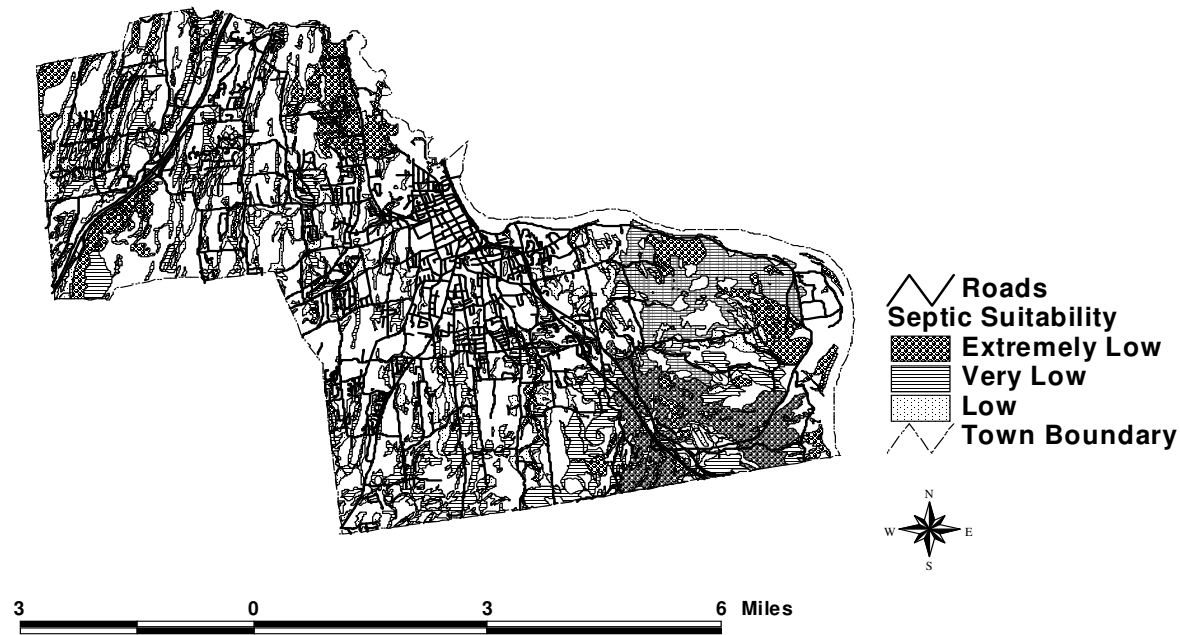
Areas with shallow Depths to Bedrock



By knowing the areas that are characterized by shallow depths to bedrock, we were able to determine which land is developable for septic. Soil types were classified into three categories:

- 1 - Good for septic: has medium, high, or very high potential for septic development based on a depth to bedrock in excess of 40".
- 2 - Bad for septic: has extremely low, very low, or low potential for septic development based on a depth to bedrock between 20" and 40".
- 3 - Unsuitable for septic: soils having a depth to bedrock of less than 20 inches.

Areas with low potential for Septic Suitability



Once again, by viewing the figures above, it is evident that much of Middletown's land is unsuitable for septic, characterized by steep slopes, has a shallow depth to bedrock, and has a shallow depth to the water table. Therefore, a portion of the land that is outside of the sewer service area and that has been designated as fully developable land in the past actually can be considered unsuitable for development.

Developable Land by Zone in Middletown:

R15 Zone: 1,070 acres

R45 Zone: 620 acres

R30 Zone: 1,265 acres

R60 Zone: 2,805 acres

Total Developable Acres: 6,375

The only developable land outside of the sewer service system is the land characterized as having the ability to support on site well and septic.

Because of the nature of the soils in Middletown, densities will be much lower than that allowed in zoning.

Therefore, a population of 65,000 is not necessarily the actual maximum population size.

We concluded that an increase of approximately 11,153 additional residents and 2,165 units could occur in Middletown based upon the actual number of net developable acres.

Quality of Development

Quality of Development - It has become increasingly apparent that the Commission is not satisfied with the type and quality of development that its own regulations are creating.

- ❖ 1.) Poor cluster designs
- ❖ 2.) Cul-de-sacs,
- ❖ 3.) Detention ponds,
- ❖ 4.) Inappropriate road design,
- ❖ 5.) Open space full of wetlands,
- ❖ 6.) Lots comprised mostly of wetlands and steep sloping land,
- ❖ 7.) Rear lots stacked on top of front lots.

The Commission is demanding better designs than the regulations require.

Well thought out, revisions to the regulations are necessary.





Development should be consistent with the 1990 Plan of Development, which sought “to encourage the appropriate, coordinated, and economic use of land in a manner which is consistent with the goals articulated in this plan, facilitates conservation of energy, and enables the efficient supply of public utilities and services.”



In order to build on its assets, the city should continue to:

- Allow existing sewer and water service boundaries to govern areas designated for future residential development.
- Continue to acquire open space and recreational lands as a means to limit residential growth.
- Encourage greater design review of new development and promote compact growth.
- Development regulations should mandate design principles in which conservation- and design-driven development should become the dominant design type.